

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A top sheet including a number of perforations for covering a liquid-receiving surface of an absorbent article, wherein;
 - the top sheet is formed of a thermoplastic resin containing a particulate material, and
 - the top sheet is provided with fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of the particulate material on a body facing surface of the top sheet and a plurality of protrusions extending from the body facing surface, and the a height of each protrusion from the body facing surface is larger than that of each fine convex portion therefrom, uppermost portions of respective protrusions defining contact points only at locations where said top sheet comes into contact with a wearer's skin so that apexes of respective protrusions extend toward a wearer's skin beyond apexes of said fine convex portions to define contact points which contact the wearer's skin.
2. (Previously presented) The top sheet as set forth in claim 1, wherein the particulate material has a mean particle size in a range between 0.1 μm and 30 μm .
3. (Previously presented) The top sheet as set forth in claim 2, wherein the thermoplastic resin contains at least two different sizes of particulate materials that differ from each other in the mean particle size by at least 9 μm .
4. (Previously presented) The top sheet as set forth in claim 3, wherein the amount of the particulate material is in a range between 20 and 150 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the thermoplastic resin.

5. (Previously presented) The top sheet as set forth in claim 1, wherein the mean height of the protrusions from the surface of the top sheet is in a range between 0.05 mm and 1.0 mm.
6. (Original) The top sheet as set forth in claim 1, which further includes micropores that allow water vapor to pass therethrough.
7. (Original) The top sheet as set forth in claim 1, wherein the protrusions are formed by mechanically stretching the top sheet.
8. (Original) A method for producing a top sheet for absorbent article, comprising:
 - a) a step of mixing from 20 to 150 parts by weight of a particulate material with 100 parts by weight of a thermoplastic resin, followed by melt-extruding the resulting mixture to form a sheet material, and
 - b) a step of placing the sheet material on the surface of a perforating member, followed by vacuuming the sheet material through perforating holes of the perforation member to perforate the sheet material.
9. (Original) The method for producing a top sheet as set forth in claim 8, which further comprises, before the step (b), a step (c) of partially stretching the sheet material by use of needles to form a number of protrusions.
10. (Original) The top sheet as set forth in claim 1, wherein the particulate material is made of inorganic particles of at least one type selected from a group consisting of titanium oxide, calcium carbonate, soda ash, gypsum, calcium sulfate, barium sulfate, sodium sulfate, magnesium carbonate, magnesium sulfate, clay, calcium phosphate, silicic anhydride, carbon and talc.

11. (Currently amended) A top sheet including a number of perforations for covering a liquid-receiving surface of an absorbent article, wherein;

the top sheet is formed of a thermoplastic resin containing a particulate material of inorganic particles, and

the top sheet includes fine convex portions of the particulate material partially exposed on a body facing surface of the top sheet and a plurality of protrusions extending from the body facing surface, and ~~the a~~ height of each protrusion from the body facing surface is larger than that of each fine convex portion therefrom, ~~uppermost portions of respective protrusions defining contact points only at locations where said top sheet comes into contact with a wearer's skin so that apexes of respective protrusions extend toward a wearer's skin beyond apexes of said fine convex portions to define contact points which contact the wearer's skin.~~

12. (Previously presented) A top sheet including a number of perforations for covering a liquid-receiving surface of an absorbent article, wherein;

the top sheet is formed of a thermoplastic resin containing a particulate material, and

the top sheet includes micropores formed around the particulate material, fine convex portions of the particulate material on a body facing surface of the top sheet, a plurality of protrusions extending from the body facing surface, and ~~the a~~ height of each protrusion from the body facing surface is larger than that of each fine convex portion therefrom, ~~uppermost portions of respective protrusions defining contact points only at locations where said top sheet comes into contact with a wearer's skin.~~

13. (Currently amended) A top sheet including a number of perforations for covering a liquid-receiving surface of an absorbent article, wherein;

the top sheet is formed of a thermoplastic resin containing a particulate material, and

*Ch
Col*

the top sheet is provided with fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of the particulate material on a body facing surface of the top sheet and a plurality of protrusions extending from the body facing surface, and the a height of each protrusion being in a range of 0.05 greater than 0.0837 mm to 1.0 mm and a mean particle size of said particulate material being in a range of 0.1 μm to 30 μm .

14. (New) A top sheet including a number of perforations for covering a liquid-receiving surface of an absorbent article, wherein;

the top sheet is formed of a thermoplastic resin containing a particulate material, and

the top sheet is provided with fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of the particulate material on a body facing surface of the top sheet, said fine convex portions including first fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of a first particulate material having a first grain size and second fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of a second particulate material having a second grain size which is greater than said first grain size.

15. (New) A top sheet including a number of perforations for covering a liquid-receiving surface of an absorbent article, wherein;

the top sheet is formed of a thermoplastic resin containing a particulate material, and

the top sheet is provided with fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of the particulate material on a body facing surface of the top sheet and a plurality of protrusions extending from the body facing surface of said top sheet, said fine convex portions including first fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of a first particulate material having a first grain size and second fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of a second particulate material having a second grain

size which is greater than said first grain size, and a height of each protrusion from the body facing surface is larger than that of each fine convex portion therefrom so that apexes of respective protrusions extend toward a wearer's skin beyond apexes of said fine convex portions to define contact points which contact the wearer's skin.

16. (New) A top sheet including a number of perforations for covering a liquid-receiving surface of an absorbent article, wherein;

the top sheet is formed of a thermoplastic resin containing a particulate material, and

the top sheet is provided with fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of the particulate material on a body facing surface of the top sheet, said fine convex portions including first fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of first a particulate material having a first grain size and second fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of a second particulate material having a second grain size greater than said first grain size, said first fine convex portions and said second fine convex portions being formed by blending said first particulate material and said second particulate material in a ratio of 40:60.

17. (New) A top sheet including a number of perforations for covering a liquid-receiving surface of an absorbent article, wherein;

the top sheet is formed of a thermoplastic resin containing a particulate material, and

the top sheet is provided with fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of the particulate material on a body facing surface of the top sheet and a plurality of protrusions extending from the body facing surface of said top sheet, said fine convex portions including first fine convex portions defined by exposing a part of a first particulate material having a first grain size and second fine convex portions defined by

CV
Confidential

exposing a part of a second particulate material having a second grain size which is greater than said first grain size, said first fine convex portions and said second fine convex portions being formed by blending said first particulate material and said second particulate material in a ratio of 40:60, and a height of each protrusion from the body facing surface is larger than that of each fine convex portion therefrom so that apexes of respective protrusions extend toward a wearer's skin beyond apexes of said fine convex portions to define contact points which contact the wearer's skin.